**"WHO SHOT ROGER RABBIT?"**

(working title)

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**THIRD DRAFT**

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**WHO SHOT ROGER RABBIT?**

This movie starts the way all movies should... with a

cartoon. It's not a Disney or a Warner's. It's not a

Fleischer, an MGM, or a Lanz. This is a lesser known

studio.

**FADE IN:**

**ON A "MAROON CARTOON"**

Accompanied by zany CARTOON MUSIC, the TITLE CARD reads:

**MAROON CARTOONS PRESENT**

**BABY HERMAN AND ROGER RABBIT**

**IN**

**"THE BUNNYSITTER"**

Below are two cameos of the cartoon's stars. One picture is

of a cherubic baby in a bonnet innocently posed with his

thumb in his mouth. The other is of a paunchy rabbit with a

gap between his front teeth. He has a loveable, if slightly

shell-shocked look. The cartoon begins...

**BABY HERMAN AND ROGER RABBIT**

are in a playpen when TWO FEMALE LEGS in high heels walk INTO

FRAME. The VOICE belonging to the legs talks down to Baby

Herman in a maternal coo.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Mommy's going to the beauty parlor,

darling. But I'm leaving you with your

favorite friend, Roger. He's going to

take very, very good care of you...

(voice turns

ominous)

... cause if he doesn't, he's going

back to the science lab!

Roger gulps as he watches the legs disappear. We HEAR

FOOTSTEPS recede and a DOOR SLAM. Roger turns confidently

back to his charge. But the little tyke is already squeezing

through the playpen bars.

**BABY HERMAN**

Baby bye-bye...

Roger makes a dive for him, misses, and gets his head stuck

between the bars. He pleads with the Baby in a voice that

resonates of Huntz Hall in "The Bowery Boys".

**ROGER RABBIT**

Hey, come back! You heard what your

mother said!

**BABY HERMAN**

ignores Roger. We FOLLOW HIM as he crawls into the kitchen.

He stops to regard something that has caught his attention...

a cookie jar. It's sitting on top of the refrigerator.

**BABY HERMAN**

Coo-kie.

**ROGER**

wearing the playpen like a pillory, comes running toward the

kitchen. But the playpen is too wide to clear the door. The

impact SHATTERING the playpen and sends Roger sprawling

across the kitchen floor. When he looks up...

**BABY HERMAN**

is swinging precariously on the door of the freeer.

**ROGER RABBIT**

Hang on, Baby. I'll save you!

Roger makes a desperate leap across the kitchen for the kid.

But Baby Herman swings the door to the freezer open and Roger

disappears inside. Baby Herman grabs a cookie and swings

back, shutting the door. He climbs down and crawls out of

the kitchen. After a beat, the freezer door opens.

**ROGER**

now shaped like a block of ice, falls out and hits the floor.

The block SHATTERS into ice cubes. Roger looks around,

dazed.

**BABY HERMAN**

has taken this opportunity to crawl out the window. Roger

races to the window. His eyes pop out of his head at what he

sees.

**ROGER'S POV**

Baby Herman is crawling along the sidewalk under the shadow

of a safe being hoisted into a second floor window by the

Acme Safe Moving Company. The rope holding the safe is

fraying down to a slender thread.

**ROGER**

gasps and rockets out the window toward Baby Herman. The

rope snaps. The safe falls. Roger arrives just in time to

pluck the Baby out of harm's way. But not in time to save

himself. The safe CRUNCHES down on his head, burying Roger

into the sidewalk. After a beat, Roger's hand appears and

spins the tumbler. The safe door opens. Inside, we see the

dazed rabbit with little TWEETING BIRDS circling his head.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Cut, cut, cut!

The cartoon action stops abruptly, but the goofy CARTOON

MUSIC PLAYS ON. We begin a slow PULL BACK TO REVEAL that

this cartoon is being filmed LIVE ON A SOUND STAGE. The

title card sits on an easle. The female legs are paper

mache' props manipulated by two HUMAN CREW MEMBERS. Wearily,

they lean the legs up against the stage wall. A human

DIRECTOR, wearing a tweed jacket and baggy pleated pants,

steps onto the set. From the equipment and the dress of the

crew, we can tell it's the 1940's. Baby Herman throws his

cookie down in disgust. He talks in a gravelly voice an

octave lower than Wallace Beery's.

**BABY HERMAN**

What the hell was wrong with that

take??

**DIRECTOR**

Nothin' with you, Baby Herman. It's on

Roger... again!

(over shoulder)

Hey! Could we lose the playback?

The MUSIC suddenly STOPS as, off to the side, the SOUNDMAN

lifts the needle off a phonograph record. The Director leans

over Roger and angrily plucks one of the birds circling his

head.

**DIRECTOR**

(continuing)

What's this, Roger?

**ROGER RABBIT**

(sheepish)

A tweeting bird?

**DIRECTOR**

That's right, a tweeting bird. But

what does the script say? 'Rabbit gets

conked. Rabbit sees stars!' Not

birds, stars!

**BABY HERMAN**

Aw, for cryin' out loud, Roger! I'll

be in my trailer... takin' a nap!

Baby Herman pulls himself up to his full height of two feet

and walks off the set. He chooses a route that takes him

under the dress of the SCRIPT GIRL. She jumps as if goosed.

Now two CREW MEMBERS lift the safe off Roger.

**ROGER RABBIT**

Please, Raoul. I can give you stars,

I know I can. Just drop the safe on my

head one more time.

**DIRECTOR**

I've already dropped it on you

twenty-three times.

**ROGER RABBIT**

Don't worry about me. I can take it.

**DIRECTOR**

I'm not worried about you. I'm worried

about the safe.

**CONTINUED PULLBACK.**

What we've been seeing has been from the POV of a MAN in a

shiny brown suit standing unobtrusively at the back of the

sound stage. Under a beat-up fedora is a craggy face that's

seen a lot in its life... but apparently didn't think much of

it was funny. EDDIE VALIANT takes a jolt from a pint of

whiskey, evidently in reaction to what he's seen. He opens

his coat and returns the pint bottle to a shoulder holster

which had formerly held a .38. Nerves steadied, he walks out

the stage door.

**EXT. MAROON STUDIO - DAY**

Valiant emerges from the stage onto a bustling Hollywood

studio lot where CARTOON CHARACTERS (TOONS) and humans are

comingling as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Valiant stops by an Acme Novelty truck which is unloading

Toon props. There are bombs, rockets, flattened pocket

watches, anvils, giant slingshots, etcetera. The license

plate is California 1946. He fishes out a pack of

Chesterfields and taps out a half a butt that had been

stubbed out. As he lights it, Valiant regards a chubby,

balding man wearing a three-piece suit and a worried

expression coming towards him. He is R.K. MAROON, studio

boss. Maroon is leading an entourage of ASSISTANTS trying to

keep up.

**MAROON**

Starting tomorrow there'll be no more

roast beef lunches. What happened to

cheese sandwiches? I was raised on

cheese sandwiches.

As the Assistants dutifully record his thoughts, Maroon sees

a GUY taking a nap in the shade of a palm tree.

**MAROON**

(continuing)

And tell that guy sleepin' over there

he's fired!

**ASSISTANT**

It's your wife's brother, R.K.

**MAROON**

(reconsiders)

Oh... tell him he's promoted. But get

him out of my sight.

As the Assistants disperse, Maroon approaches Valiant.

**MAROON**

Valiant, did you see the rabbit?

**VALIANT**

He was blowin' his lines, all right.

So what?

**MAROON**

So what? He's already put me three

weeks behind on the shooting schedule!

Now an EDITH HEAD-TYPE hustles up to show Maroon several

costume designs.

**COSTUMER**

Your reaction, R.K.?

Maroon quickly checks out the drawing.

**MAROON**

No! That's not funny.

She flips another drawing.

**MAROON**

(continuing)

That's funny. Put a homburg on him

it'll even be funnier. Huh, Valiant?

He grabs the pad and shows Valiant. The rendering is of a

hippo in a pink polka-dot tu-tu.

**VALIANT**

(deadpan)

Yeah, that'd be a riot.

Maroon responds to Valiant's sarcasm with raised eyebrows.

**MAROON**

Boy, I hope what you have ain't

contagious or I'll be out of business.

He hands the pad back to the designer, who departs.

**MAROON**

(continuing)

How much do you know about show

business, Valiant?

**VALIANT**

Only there's no business like it, no

business I know.

Valiant watches an ALLIGATOR in a rebel uniform dragging a

brace of cannons and several TOADSTOOLS parade by.

**MAROON**

Yeah, and there's no business as

expensive. I'm twenty-five grand over

budget on the latest Bunnysitter

cartoon and it's all because that

rabbit can't keep his mind on his work.

And you know why?

**VALIANT**

One too many safes dropped on his head?

**MAROON**

Nah, that goes with the territory.

He's a stunt bunny.

Maroon takes a copy of the "Hollywood Tattler" out of his

pocket.

**MAROON**

(continuing)

Here's the problem...

(reads)

"Seen cooing over calamari with

notsonew Sugar Daddy was Jessica

Rabbit... wife of Maroon star, Roger".

(looks up)

His wife's a tramp, but he thinks she's

Betty Crocker. The doubt's eatin' him

up.

**VALIANT**

So what do you want me to do?

**MAROON**

Get me a couple juicy pictures.

Somethin' I can wise the rabbit up

with.

**VALIANT**

I don't work in Toontown.

**MAROON**

You don't have to. The rabbit's wife

sings at an underground Toon revue

joint called The Ink & Paint Club. You

can catch her in action there.

**VALIANT**

The job's gonna cost you a hundred

bucks.

**MAROON**

A hundred bucks? That's ridiculous.

**VALIANT**

So's the job.

Valiant starts to walk away.

**MAROON**

All right, all right... You got your

hundred bucks.

Maroon turns, snaps his fingers. His Assistant appears out

of nowhere with Maroon's checkbook and a pen. The Assistant

turns and stoops so that Maroon can write the check on his

back.

**MAROON**

(continuing)

Fifty now, fifty when you deliver the

pictures.

Maroon tears the check off and hands it to Valiant. Suddenly

Valiant ducks in reflex to a large shadow that passes

overhead.

**MAROON**

(continuing;

chuckles)

Kinda jumpy aren't you, Valiant? It's

just Dumbo.

**ABOVE THEIR HEADS - DUMBO**

swoops back and forth, then hovers, ears flapping like a

hummingbird.

**MAROON**

I got him on loan from Disney.

**VALIANT**

Aren't you the lucky one...

Valiant grabs the check from Maroon and starts for the gate.

**MAROON**

When will I hear from you?

**VALIANT**

As soon as is humanly possible.

We FOLLOW Valiant out the gate under a wrought iron sign that

reads "Maroon Cartoon Studios". As he starts across the road

he's almost run over by a Toon roadster that ROARS out of the

gates. When it BLASTS ITS HORN, it's the FIRST FIVE NOTES

from the WOODY WOODPECKER SONG: "HA-HA-HA-HA-HA". Valiant

jumps back as the roadster passes. WOODY THE WOODPECKER'S

behind the wheel with a self-important smile on his face.

Valiant angrily waves the cloud of Toon dust away.

**VALIANT**

(coughs)

Damn Toons.

**ACROSS THE STREET - A TROLLEY CAR**

is slowing to a stop in front of the studio. It's a Pacific

and Electric "Red Car", part of a vast system of electric

trollies that once criss-crossed the L.A. Basin. Valiant

steps onto the "Red Car". He reaches into his pocket to give

the CONDUCTOR his nickel fare. But he comes up with a

handful of lint. He holds out the check.

**CONDUCTOR**

What do I look like, a bank?

The Conductor jerks his thumb toward the door. Valiant

suffers the public humiliation,of having to step down past

the rest of the boarding passengers. He walks around to the

back of the Red Car where a gang of TEN-YEAR-OLDS are

loitering. When the BELL SOUNDS and the Red Car starts to

pull away, the Kids make a dash for a place on the cow

catcher. Valiant joins them. We HOLD as the Red Car moves

away and the street urchins regard their older partner in

crime with curiosity.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**A BILLBOARD SIGN**

It reads: "L.A.'s Pacific and Electric Red Car -- America's

Finest Public Transportation System". PAN DOWN to see that

the sign is on the roof of the trolley terminal. Red Cars

are going in and out of the shed. MOVE IN on one car

approaching the terminal from down the street. As it passes

by...